

Enjoying Uplifting Emotions

Our feelings going up and down is inevitable and essential to our well-being. We need emotional challenge to build resilience. However, we benefit even more when we pay attention to our positive feelings. We benefit when we pay attention to our emotional health.

A key to wellbeing is to seek out activities which give us uplifting emotions and to make the most of these feelings. The uplifting emotions offer us beacons of light and satisfaction.

We can create purpose and passion for ourselves by trying out new experiences and noticing what we respond to with enthusiasm and determination. We can also meet new people and notice who we respond to with warmth, kindness and gratitude.

Outlined below is a list of pointers to savour the 20 uplifting emotions in the Emotions Ring.

Stretching Me Emotions	Connecting Me Emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enjoy the moment of <i>exhilaration</i>. ➤ Earn prestige by feeling <i>valued</i>. ➤ Credit yourself for your success with <i>pride</i>. ➤ Tackle challenges with <i>confidence</i>. ➤ Explore your interests with <i>curiosity</i>. ➤ Boost yourself by <i>admiring</i> others. ➤ Embrace possibility with <i>hope</i>. ➤ Conquer fear through <i>courage</i>. ➤ Prime yourself for action with <i>enthusiasm</i>. ➤ Direct your energy with <i>determination</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feel secure through <i>belonging</i>. ➤ Expect the best from others through trust. ➤ Have fun with others through <i>camaraderie</i>. ➤ Appreciate what you have through <i>contentment</i>. ➤ Credit others for what they've given you by showing <i>gratitude</i>. ➤ Share your strength with others through <i>kindness</i>. ➤ Share in others' success with <i>empathetic joy</i>. ➤ Choose wisely to feel <i>responsible</i>. ➤ Care for others with <i>compassion</i>. ➤ Restore harmony with <i>forgiveness</i>.

Which are easiest / hardest for you to achieve?

More Ways to Savour Positive Emotions

When we focus on our positive emotions they expand. Some more tips for savouring uplifting emotions are outlined below. Try out a few and see what works for you.

Think

Regard things you enjoy as special treats. Anticipate and savour them.

When you look forward to something, imagine - what you'll do, who will be there and the emotions you hope to feel.

Immerse yourself in what you're doing. Identify and name specifically the emotions you feel. Observe them expand. Allow yourself to notice how good it feels. Feel them becoming a part of you.

Take in as much detail as possible. Take a mental photograph of the situation. Decide how you're going to remember this.

Take the time to appreciate your accomplishments. Take credit for your part in whatever has happened.

Recall events and re-create the positive emotions you felt. Hold on to whatever feels good.

Focus on and value what you have.

View life as a gift and look for the good around you.

Realise happiness leads to success – not the other way.

Do

The best way to feel good is to do good. Positive feelings come from actions.

Express thanks to others for what they share with you.

Tell another person when you're feeling appreciative of something.

Take on a responsibility.

Get involved in a team project.

Join a club to enjoy an activity with like-minded people.

Sharpen your focus on your senses, for example, close your eyes while you're eating.

Find ways to record good times, whether in a journal or visually.

Create a happiness board, with mementoes of good times.

Collect positive mementos, for example, shells from your favourite beach.

Dealing with Challenging Emotions

All emotions share a common purpose, to maintain our state of comfort. Challenging emotions tell us something is wrong, and we need to address it. To deal with these emotions we need to be able to interpret what they are telling us.

When difficult emotions swamp us, we can assume they are who we are, rather than just bad experiences passing through. Although it might feel like it, these gangs of emotions are not out to get us!

We can start by working out the first emotion we feel and what this is about. We can then respond appropriately to move on.

Instead of assuming the emotions we feel come *from* our self, we can treat emotions as messages that pass *through* us. We can *lightly attend* to and shrink unwanted emotions.

Ways to deal with Difficult Emotions

Talk about and write down what you feel.

It's helpful to distinguish between *physical discomfort* and *psychological pain*. We can treat disturbing emotions as physical sensations. The simplest way to change them is to get up and move.

When we're about to give a talk and have butterflies in our stomach, we can think we're feeling anxious either because of our self-doubts or, more helpfully, because our body is revving up to give an important talk. We can take a drink of cold water and the butterflies disappear, and, along with them, the doubts.

We might assume the best way to cope with performance anxiety is to try to calm down. However, we can *reframe* anxiety as excitement, saying "I am excited" out loud. The feelings of excitement and anxiety – mind racing and stomach churning – are similar sensations. Changing the emotional label can prime a more positive attitude.

When we do intense *exercise*, we get many of the sensation (rapid heart rate, sweating, and rapid breathing) that can frighten us when we feel anxious. Over time, we can learn that these sensations aren't dangerous.

When we find a *poem* that expresses how we feel, we realise we're not the only one who feels like this. We can read the same poem every night and learn it off by heart. Our favourite lines can become a mantra to combat any bad thoughts.

Non-verbal forms of self-expression are useful, for example, through the language of music, dance and other expressive arts.

Spending time outdoors in *nature* and noticing what's around us lifts our mood.

Writing down the most important *goals* we want to achieve, and alongside these the emotions coming from achieving them, tell us what emotions we really like.

Listed below are pointers for handling the 20 challenging emotions in the Emotions Ring.

Me First Emotions

When we feel our place in the group is being threatened, instead of putting others down, we can look for ways to find our better self by being of value to others.

ANNOYED zone

- Boredom -** Use boredom as time to think.
- Frustration -** Contain frustration by staying in the moment.
- Anger -** Channel anger to restore justice.

GRUDGING zone

- Schadenfreude -** Focus on camaraderie to eclipse gloating.
- Envy -** Tame competitive envy by r e-framing as admiration.

UNGRATEFUL zone

- Arrogance -** Puncture self-important arrogance with humility.
- Over-entitlement -** Put over-entitlement in its place with grace.

MEAN zone

- Resentment -** Let go of resentment by being honest with those to whom you are bitter.
- Contemptuous –** Be helpful to those you feel contemptuous towards.
- Spite –** Address the hostility that is causing spite.

Protecting Me Emotions

When we feel our self-worth is under threat, instead of putting ourselves down, we can find our purpose and affirm what's important to us.

DOWN zone

Lonely - Be true to and befriend yourself when lonely.

Sadness - Give yourself time and space for sadness.

SCARED zone

Self-doubt - Over-ride self-doubt with enthusiasm.

Worry - Dispel worry through determined action.

Overwhelmed - Find hope when overwhelmed.

SORRY zone

Embarrassment - Bounce back from embarrassment with humour.

Guilt - Resolve guilt by making amends.

Shame - Embrace the kindness of others to tame shame.

USELESS zone

Humiliation - Find relief from humiliation in humility.

Ignored - If ignored, hold on to what's important to you.

More Tips for Addressing Unwanted Emotions

When something bad happens you have three choices. You can either let it define you, let it destroy you, or you can let it strengthen you.

~ **Dr. Seuss**, (1904 – 1991) American author.

Some more tips for addressing difficult emotions are listed below, both thoughts and actions. Try out a few and see what works for you.

We can't control the world, so to let our well-being hinge on what we can't control is pointless. Complaining, feeling sorry for ourselves or getting upset only makes things worse. Better to try to treat everything that happens, no matter how challenging, as something to be embraced.

S.T.O.P.

S = Stop. Hit the pause button when you're troubled with challenging feelings.

T = Take deep breaths. Focus by counting them. In through your nose for 4 seconds, then out through your mouth for 4 seconds.

O = Observe how the air is cooler when you breathe in and warmer when you breathe out; how your stomach gets bigger and smaller. Notice what you're feeling and thinking

P = Proceed in a way that will help prevent things getting out of control. Action leads to insight more often than insight leads to action.

THINK

Notice the thoughts and emotions that are *passing through you*.
Learn the signs in your body that tell you that you're feeling difficult emotions.

Accept these feelings as a natural part of life.

Recognize that you're not your emotion. You are more than your emotions.

Name your feelings as specifically as possible.

If they persist, use a scale from 1 to 10 to rate the intensity of the emotion.

Go over your first reaction, how it has affected you. Check out the story you've told yourself about what has happened. Write a short summary of it. Work out what more you need to know.

Consider-What has caused you to feel this way?
What is **the purpose of this emotion**? What is it telling you to do?
Would you say to a friend the things you're saying to yourself?

Get things into perspective by creating some distance between yourself and the emotions passing through -

- as if you were a fly on the wall, someone who is watching
- talk about yourself in the third person
- explain it, as if you are a teacher explaining it to a young person.

Remember- emotions are your *interpretation* of what is going on.
Ask yourself - what is my part in this?
Can you see the issue from the other people's point of view?
Accept things that you can't change.

Turn your attention to the world around you *and* observe what else is happening beyond these feelings.

Think of something positive, for example, a special place or a person you love.

DO

Breathe alongside the discomfort.
Stand up and stretch while letting out a big sigh.
Go to a window for light.
Massage the back of your neck.
Touch people you're close with.
Take a drink or splash your face with cold water.
Have a good laugh at yourself.

Spend time outside in nature, especially, if possible, by water.
Get some exercise.
Get enough sleep.

Eat well.

Keep to your routines.

Treat yourself with kindness.

Take a break and fill it with positive experiences.

Get involved in a team project.

Communicate respectfully to others how they're upsetting you.

Talk to someone you trust.

Keep a journal about your emotions. Include both the factual and emotional aspects of things that happen.

Create your own *mantra* - a word or phrase that helps you take control of your emotion. For example, if you get angry, you might go for a word you link with gentleness.

Spend time on projects that give you a sense of purpose.

Focus on the fun of events to help you avoid taking things too seriously.

Take action to get started on what you need to do, calm and motivation will follow.

Dealing with Intrusive Thoughts

If you have intrusive thoughts, the important thing is how you're responding to these thoughts. Trying to get rid of them makes them persist. The attention you're giving them tells your brain that they're important.

The key to escaping this is to accept them as unwanted thoughts. You could write them down and get them 'out of your head'. Or redirect your attention elsewhere by reading or listening to music.

Each time you notice your attention drifting back to the intrusive thoughts, return to the task at hand. But only once you've acknowledged the thoughts. This shows that you're not afraid of them. When you can just let them be a part of your experience, you're communicating confidence to your brain. This is the key to decreasing them.